

Appl. No. 10/695,631
Amdt. dated January 10, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 9, 2004

PATENT

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action Summary mailed December 9, 2004. This response is considered to be timely since it is being filed on January 10, 2005 and the shortened statutory period for reply was set to expire one month from the mailing date of the communication. In the Office Action, the Examiner restricted the claims into two groups:

Group I: Figs. 1-9; and

Group II: Figs. 10-17.

The Applicant elects Group I for prosecution in the present application, and without prejudice to pursue the embodiment shown in Figs. 10-17 and their related claims in a divisional patent application. Group I is covered by claims 1-13 and 21-24, with those claims covering both Groups I and II. Claims 14-20 are hereby cancelled.

The Office Action requires election of a single disclosed species for each of two separately identified groups of species. In the event that any of the species election requirements is not withdrawn, Applicants note their understanding that the Office will follow the procedure set forth in MPEP §809.02(c), which provides for a complete action on the merits of all claims readable on the elected species, and in MPEP §803.02, whereby upon the finding of allowable species, examination will continue with the nonelected species until all species have been examined or a nonallowable species is found.

CONCLUSION

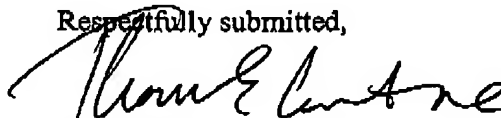
In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

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If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 858-350-6100 .

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas E. Coverstone
Reg. No. 36,492

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 858-350-6100
Fax: 415-576-0300
Attachments
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